



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4905

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November 9, 2005

R. David Paulison
Acting Director
FEMA
500 C Street, SW
Washington, DC 20472

Dear Director Paulison:

I write to express my concern with several issues relevant to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's on-going operations in response to Hurricane Katrina. I understand that the magnitude of the disaster has placed a great burden on the agencies responding to the crisis, but would expect that the massive outpouring of private support and federal expenditures has led to significant improvements. Several reports recently brought to my attention have caused concern about the continued adequacy of FEMA's operations.

Specifically, several concerns have been brought to my attention regarding operations in Hancock County, Mississippi, including:

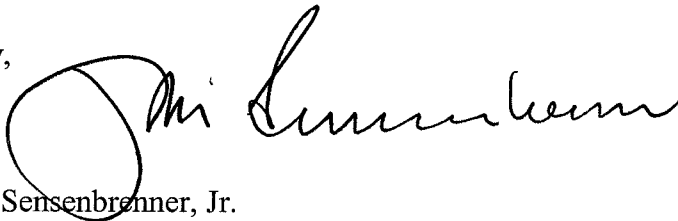
- Housing and shelter are obvious primary needs. It is my understanding that thousands of filed requests for housing and assistance remain unprocessed and incomplete and, as a result, many of the residents of Hancock County continue to sleep in tents. Complaints to me have indicated that trailer distribution is completely inadequate and an overly bureaucratic and stressful process for the survivors.
- Another concern relayed to me is that definitive regional leadership is absent. A chain of command with points of contact is apparently either unknown or nonexistent. A constituent of mine with first hand knowledge of this situation reports that coordination between the multiple authority levels is woefully lacking, resulting in absence of services and at times a duplication of services. FEMA was not and has not been in communication with private relief efforts to better distribute and create efficiencies in aid distribution. The constituent further states that FEMA also lacked the ability to seek out best practices and adapt their protocols to the given situations to alleviate human suffering.

R. David Paulison

- By all accounts, the use of labor from across the nation in the form of firefighters, hand crews, and other government workers was inefficient. As an example, reports indicate that woodland fire crews were first sent for processing in Atlanta, Georgia for 7-10 days of their 21-30 day tours of duty. To compound the inefficiency, skilled fire crews who could have helped with human suffering or debris removal were often assigned to trailer inspections and helping with the FEMA bureaucratic process.
- I have been told that after almost 70 days, less only a small percentage of businesses are in service, the majority of existing homes are without power, and the majority of residents are in temporary or camping style "housing."

I would appreciate a reply addressing the accuracy of these concerns and the steps FEMA is undertaking to rectify the situation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr.", written over a large, stylized circular flourish.

F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr.
Member of Congress

FJS:rz/ts